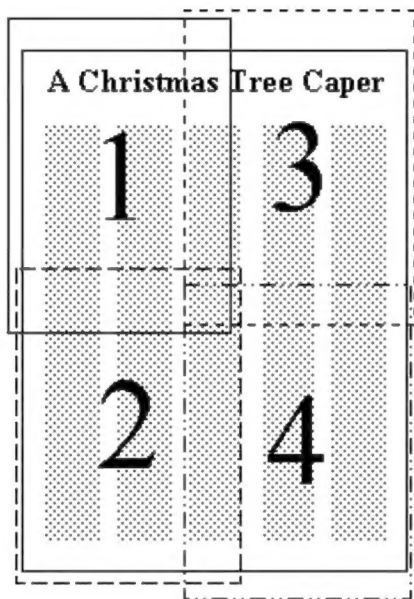


NOTE: This newspaper appearance was divided and enlarged to fill 8 ½" x 11" pages, roughly in the manner shown below.



TERRY



LET ME HANDLE THIS

By JACK RITCHIE

(Copyright 1955 by News Syndicate Co. Inc.)

"DEAR," Jenny Stevens said to her husband, "You know you have trouble changing a light bulb without a book of instructions."

Jimmy Stevens examined the faucet in his hands. "How can I work when you have no confidence in me?"

Jenny mopped up the last of the water on the floor. "I had confidence that you'd think of shutting off the water before you unscrewed the faucet. I regret to say that it got me nowhere."

Jimmy showed her the faucet. "Is that reddish thing the washer?"

"Yes, dear."

He patted her on the shoulder and smiled. "The floor looks nice and clean. Let's keep it that way."

It took him 45 minutes to put in a new washer and replace the faucet. Then he went down to the basement and turned on the water. When he returned, he took a kitchen chair and sat down to admire his handiwork.

The faucet began to drip.

Jimmy pursed his lips as he watched and Jenny gently drummed her fingertips on the table.

Jimmy got up. "Well," he said. "It was a good try. I think I'll see if the newspaper's here yet."

He was reading the sports page when Jenny began running a dustcloth over some of the living room furniture.

HE SAID HE HAD HIS SUSPICIONS

He put down the paper. "Sometimes I wonder if Ed Reilly comes over here to see me. Of course, we've been bosom pals for nigh onto a lifetime, but nevertheless, I have my suspicions."

Jenny emptied several ashtrays into the silent butler. "He's

voice. "Too bad about our television set," she said. "We got the picture, but not the sound."

Silently Ed got out his pocket knife and advanced upon the set.

Jimmy put his feet on the hassock and relaxed. "Go ahead. Wreck it. You'll hear from my lawyer in the morning."

Ed unscrewed the back of the set and fiddled around inside it for a few minutes. Then he plugged it into the outlet and switched it on. After a short warm-up, the picture flashed on the screen and the sound came on clear.

Ed put the back onto the set again. "Just a loose tube. Any man of average intelligence should have been able to figure that out."

"You're wonderful," Jenny said. "So handy around the house."

"True," Ed agreed. "I'm really rolling tonight."

Jenny glanced covertly at her husband and then spoke. "There's the kitchen faucet," she said.

Jimmy got to his feet. "Over my dead body."

"The wrenches and things are still out there," Jenny said. "The faucet keeps dripping."

"Probably a washer," Ed said.

"Look," Jimmy said. "If Ed walks into that kitchen and lays a hand on the faucet, I'm walking out the front door. Perhaps never to return," he added darkly.

Ed waved goodbye to him and he and Jenny walked into the kitchen.

Ed was surveying the work to be done when they heard the front door slam. He looked at Jenny. "I think it might be wiser if I didn't touch it."

"Never mind," Jenny said. "He

when the phone rang. She picked up the receiver and listened carefully. Then she phoned a taxi and went to the police station to bail out her husband.

They walked the quiet streets back toward their house and Jimmy kicked at loose stones on the sidewalk. "So it was childish," he said. "Fixing the lamp, I could stand. Maybe even the television set. But the kitchen faucet was too much. Something snapped in my mind. I felt useless, unloved, and unwanted."

"You're not unloved, dear," Jenny said. "Or unwanted."

Jimmy stopped in his tracks.

"All right, dear," Jenny said, taking his arm. "It was something I just couldn't resist. I apologize."

They stopped at the corner to let traffic go by. "Caught right in the act," Jimmy said bitterly. "Just my luck to have a squad car come by."

When they entered the privacy of their home, Jenny took off her coat and then she burst out laughing.

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Jenny emptied several ashtrays into the silent butler. "He's such a handsome man. So gay. So debonair. So competent."

"I think I'll throw him out tonight," Jimmy said thoughtfully.

"Dear," Jenny said. "You're much too sensitive. Just because he winks at me and leers, you shouldn't be inhospitable."

At 7 o'clock, Ed Reilly knocked at the door and Jimmy let him in.

He handed his hat to Jimmy and walked by. "How are you, Jenny?"

Her shoulders drooped slightly and she ran the back of a limp hand over her forehead. "I'll be all right in a minute or so. It's just that I get a little weak when I have to mop the floors so often."

Ed frowned. "A delicate woman like you shouldn't have to do such heavy labor."

"That's nothing," Jimmy said. "I make her chop wood and plow the north 40. Uphill yet."

Ed lowered himself into a chair. "Maybe you'd better sit on the davenport, Ed," Jenny said. "That lamp next to you doesn't work."

He looked at it with speculative interest.

"One of the wires came out of the plug," Jenny said. "Jimmy's going to fix it as soon as he can get to the library for a book on electricity."

Ed grunted and reached into his pocket. He brought out a jackknife and pulled out the screw-driver blade. Three minutes later the lamp was repaired and burning.

He turned to Jimmy and smiled pleasantly. "Any questions?"

Jenny spoke with an innocent

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"Never mind," Jenny said. "He probably just went to the drug-store."

After Ed repaired the faucet so that it no longer dripped, he and Jenny went into the living room to watch television. They sat there for an hour, and then Ed got up. "As a single man I feel uneasy alone with a married woman. Also I think that in some innocent way I'm responsible for this. I think I'd better go home."

He left, but he was back knocking on the door in five minutes.

He stood in the doorway. "Three of the tires on my car have been deflated," he announced. "I suspect that sneaking husband of yours."

"Oh?" Jenny said thoughtfully. "Three?"

SAID HE PROBABLY HAD LOST HIS NERVE

"Yes," Ed said sweetly. "Only three. He probably lost his nerve before he could finish the job. I don't have a tire pump, so I'd like to borrow yours."

She gave him the keys to the garage and Ed got the tire pump.

When he was through re-inflating his tires, he brought the pump to the front door. "From now on I come only once a month. I can take a hint." Then he smiled, tipped his hat, and left.

Jenny took the pump back to the garage and when she returned to the kitchen she looked at the dripless faucet and sighed.

She went down to the basement and shut off the water and then she began taking the faucet apart.

Jenny was just cleaning up

"All right, dear," Jenny said, taking his arm. "It was something I just couldn't resist. I apologize."

They stopped at the corner to let traffic go by. "Caught right in the act," Jimmy said bitterly. "Just my luck to have a squad car come by."

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Next Door to



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ARD ABOUT
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OH, LIEUTENANT CHARLES!
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YOU WERE ONE OF THE
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"Just my luck to have a squad
car come by."

When they entered the privacy
of their home, Jenny took off her
coat and then she burst out
laughing.

Jimmy waited patiently in the
easy chair until she stopped.
"Let's face it," he said. "I'm all
thumbs when it come to repair-
ing things. And not only that, I
get jealous of anybody who
shows me up in front of my
wife."

"Dear," Jenny said. "I love you
more than 26,000 Ed Reillys."
He reached for her and then
after a while he let go of her to
listen. The drip of the kitchen
faucet was quite distinct.

A smile came to his face.
"Ed couldn't fix it either," Jen-
ny said. "He made a terrible, ter-
rible botch of it."

THEN ED'S SMILE CHANGED TO GRIN

The smile changed to a grin.
"Some type handyman he is."
And then an idea came into his
eyes. "Off my lap," he said. "And
wait here until I return."

He went into the kitchen and
after a minute or two came back.
He held up a finger for attention.
"Listen," he said proudly.

Jenny dutifully tilted her head
and listened. "I don't hear a
thing."

"Exactly," Jimmy said. "You
may pat me on the head."

"You're marvelous, dear. You
fixed the faucet."

"Well," Jimmy said with a trace
of embarrassment. "Not exactly.
But anyway you won't hear it
drip any more. I put a sponge
under the faucet."

She patted his head. "So intel-
ligent."

He nodded. "Ed will sure have
to get up early if he wants to
beat me in the brain department.
I guess I've got the last laugh
after all."

Jenny was about to say some-
thing and then she changed her
mind.

She decided that he ought to
have a good night's sleep before
he found out that Ed had de-
flated all the tires of their car in
the garage when he had borrowed
the tire pump.

THE END

After His Hair

Detroit, Aug. 8 (AP).—Police
are looking for a distinguished
appearing man with brown hair
graying at the temples. A bald
man ordered a toupe from a wig
shop. He tried it on to make sure
it was a good fit; then walked out
without paying the \$155 bill.
That's the fellow they're looking
for.

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